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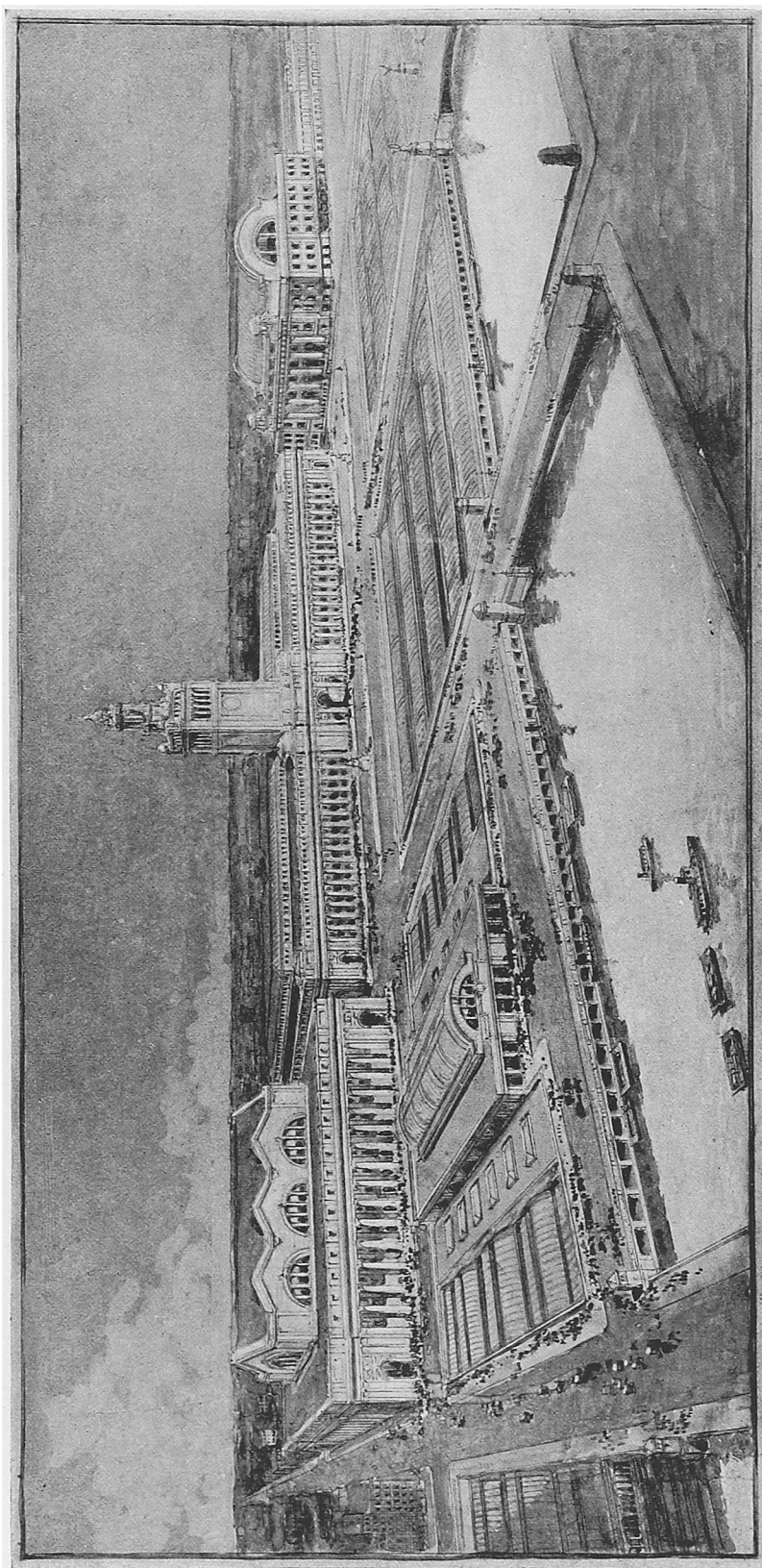
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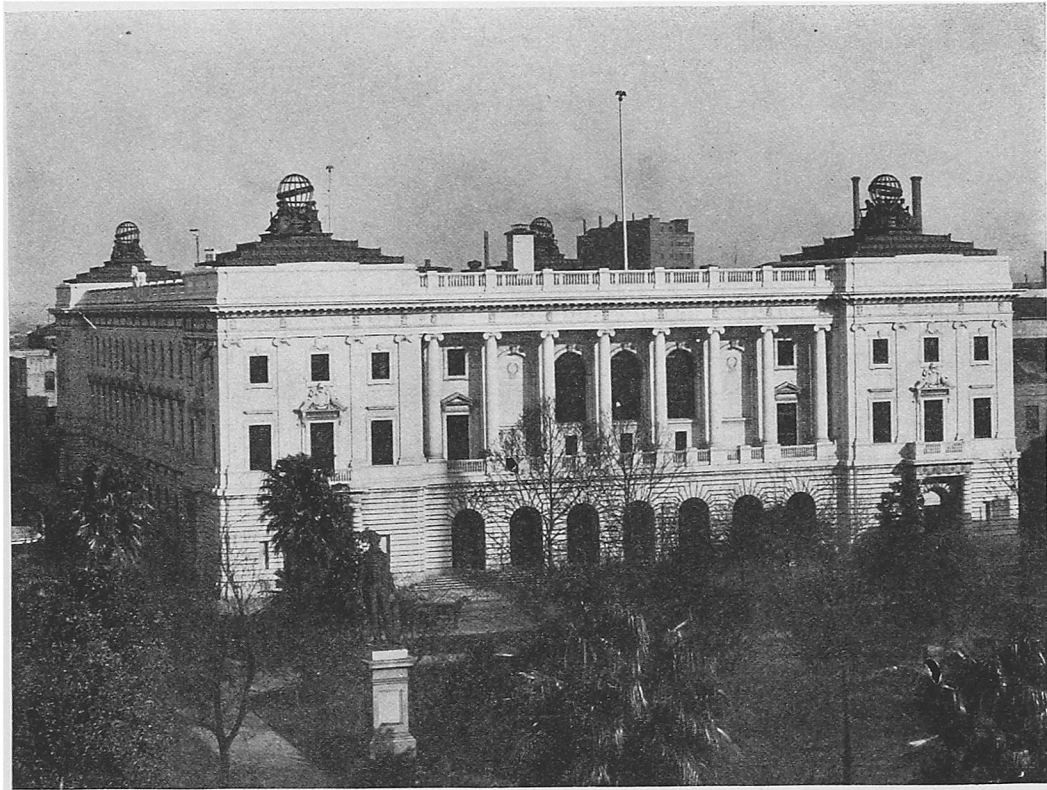
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CHICAGO'S RECOMMENDED NEW POST OFFICE SITE NEW UNION TERMINAL TO THE LEFT—NORTHWESTERN DEPOT TO THE RIGHT

The Chicago Plan Commission has not recommended a type for the new Chicago postal structure. The above is merely a suggested type to occupy the two blocks recommended on Canal Street between the present Northwestern terminal and the Union Station, now under construction, to harmonize with these depots. Building area, 205,301 sq. ft. Adjacent street area, 390,000 sq. ft. The appropriation bill now pending before the Public Buildings and Grounds Committee of the House of Representatives for the purchase of this site provides for the expenditure of such sum as may be necessary not to exceed \$6,000,000.



NEW ORLEANS POST OFFICE

From Chicago Plan Commission Collection

Importance of Chicago's Postal Problem in the Scheme of Commercial Expansion

By THE EDITOR

IS Chicago to have an adequate post office or only another fresh disappointment?

This is the great question that the Chicago Plan Commission is endeavoring, through an intelligent and well-ordered campaign of enlightenment, to have answered in the affirmative.

As The Plan of Chicago unfolds before our eyes we begin to gain a new impression of its magnitude and efficiency. Here, indeed, we perceive the ultimate expression of this latter term which has become the watchword of modern commercial enterprise. The Plan is really a huge feat of engineering and construction, designed to facilitate all the activities of a huge metropolis. It is not a matter

of ornamenting but of building a city such as the world has never seen before.

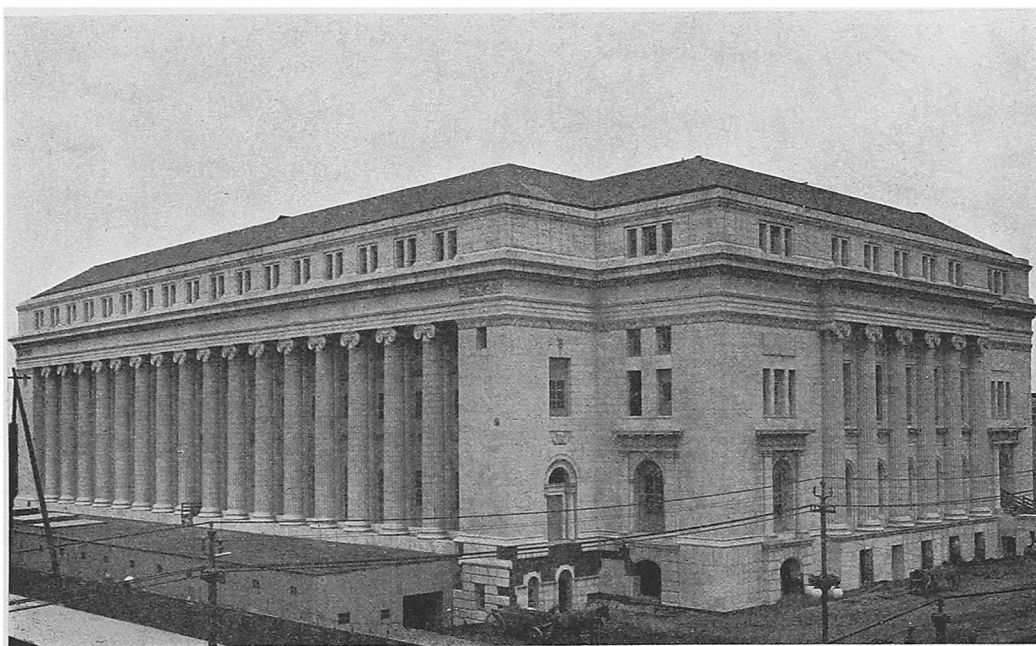
The new post office, so sadly needed, is not a detail or child of the plan; it is merely one of the city's most urgent necessities which has been fitted into the plan. This fitting in is not attempted with a view to merely disposing of the matter, but with the intentions of increasing, in every way, the facilities and usefulness of the new post office through such a location as will give it access to all of the plan's advantages, especially to such as relate to traffic and will expedite the handling of the mails. One glance at the situation proposed by the Plan Commission should be enough to convince any one of its unsurpassable advan-



POST OFFICE, MILWAUKEE
Building erected 1899

—From Chicago Plan Commission Collection

When the Milwaukee post office site was purchased, at a cost of \$40,000, the postal receipts were only \$610,907. The area of the Milwaukee site is 97,794 sq. ft. Chicago would have a site area of thirty-one blocks, based on the proportionate postal receipts of Milwaukee and Chicago. The site recommended for Chicago is two blocks, not thirty-one.



POST OFFICE, DENVER
Condemnation 1907; building completed 1916

—From Chicago Plan Commission Collection

When the Denver post office site was purchased, at a cost of \$500,000, the postal receipts were only \$930,513. On the same basis, Chicago, with postal receipts of \$25,000,000, would have a postal site appropriation of \$13,400,000. The area of the Denver site is 98,400 sq. ft. Chicago would have a site area of twenty blocks, based on the proportionate postal receipts of Denver and Chicago. The site recommended for Chicago is two blocks, not twenty. The appropriation asked is six millions, not thirteen.

tages. Where else could a post office be better located than between two gigantic railway terminals and within walking distance of the heart of the business district?

It has long been one of our civic jokes that Chicago had outgrown the present post office before it was completed. The repetition of this irony in the erection of a ten-story office building covering one block for post office purposed, as Federal officials have suggested, would, however, be nothing short of a tragedy. Two blocks are necessary to supply the street area demanded by teaming and the site proposed by the Plan Commission supplies this area on a two-level street, thereby providing amply against the future. To fail to provide for it would be, as Napoleon said, "worse than a crime; a blunder."

Little does the average citizen appreciate the persistent and effective campaign that the Plan Commission has made to further the best interests of Chicago in this matter. For months it has been busy securing the co-oper-

ation and support of all of the city's great business men in preparing and presenting this matter to the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds of the House of Representatives.

Petitions have not only been circulated throughout Chicago, receiving the endorsement of thousands of prominent business men, but over two hundred cities in the zone of Chicago's influence and intimate trade relations have been circularized. Two hundred and thirty-two of the leading cities of Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin have responded through their commercial and civic organizations, with endorsements of the Plan Commission's recommendation for adequate postal facilities in Chicago on the ground that the proper handling of mail at Chicago was vital to their interests as well as its own. All of these petitions have been appropriately bound and



POST OFFICE, BALTIMORE
Site purchased 1881; building erected 1895

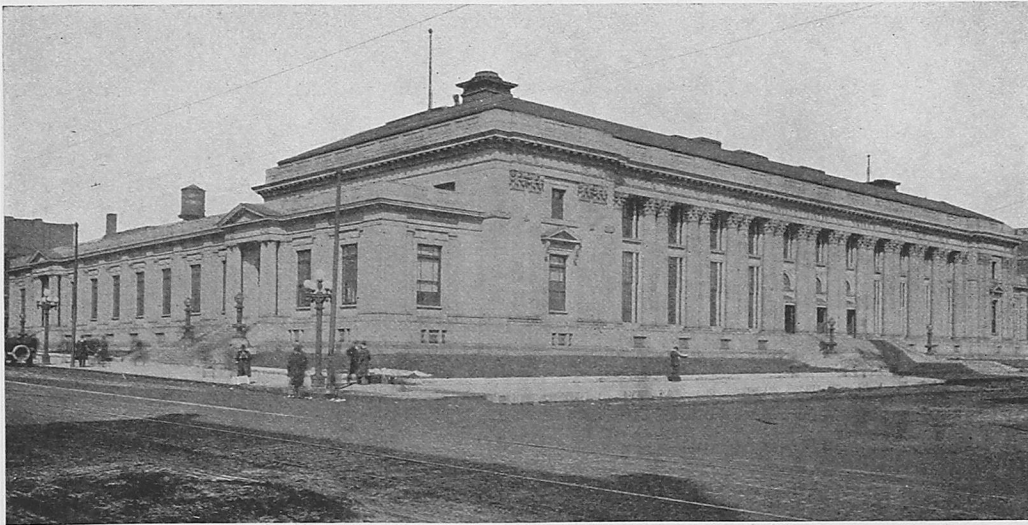
—From Chicago Plan Commission Collection

When the Baltimore post office site was purchased, at a cost of \$550,000, the postal receipts were only \$827,102. On the same basis, Chicago, with postal receipts of \$25,000,000, would have a postal site appropriation of \$16,500,000. The area of the Baltimore site is 67,721 sq. ft. Chicago would have a site area of fifteen blocks, based on the proportionate postal receipts of Baltimore and Chicago. The site recommended for Chicago is two blocks, not fifteen. The appropriation asked is six millions, not sixteen and a half.

presented to the Committee of Congress.

On September 23, 1915, a luncheon was tendered by his honor, Mayor William Hale Thompson, to the Illinois Senators, the Chicago Representative in Congress and the Executive and Special Post Office Committees of the Chicago Plan Commission, at the Chicago Club, for the purpose of discussing the proposed site and type of building for the Chi-

cago Post Office. After listening to the report of Mr. Charles H. Wacker, Chairman of the Chicago Plan Commission, the Mayor declared his intention to invite to a special conference, to be held in Chicago, about November 15, 1915, the Honorable William G. McAdoo, Secretary of the Treasury; the Honorable A. S. Burleson, Post Master General; the Honorable Frank Clark, Chairman of the Pub-



POST OFFICE, MINNEAPOLIS
Building erected 1907

—From Chicago Plan Commission Collection

When the Minneapolis post office site was purchased, at a cost of \$349,000, the postal receipts were only \$2,554,129. The area of the Minneapolis post office site is 108,900 sq. ft. Chicago would have a site area of eight blocks, based on the proportionate postal receipts of Minneapolis and Chicago. The site recommended for Chicago is two blocks, not eight.

lic Buildings Committee; the Honorable John J. Fitzgerald, Chairman of the Appropriation Committee, and the Senators and Representatives from the State of Illinois to listen to a further presentation and discussion of this vitally important matter.

This conference took place November 1st, and the addresses of the Mayor and the chairman of the Plan Commission, together with the resolution of the Chicago Association of Commerce's Executive Committee, effectively supported by John G. Shedd, George M. Reynolds, James B. Forgan, and Chicago members of Congress, paved the way for a special hearing on January 7, 1916, by the Committee on Public Grounds and Buildings of the House of Representatives on the bill for the purchase of the proposed site.

At this hearing addresses were delivered by William Hale Thompson, Charles H. Wacker, Ernest R. Graham, architect; Harry A. Wheeler, chairman of the Special Post Office Committee of the Chicago Plan Commission and Joseph G. Cannon, Representative in Congress from the State of Illinois.

The FINE ARTS JOURNAL takes this opportunity to present to its readers the following

addresses of Mr. Wacker and Mr. Wheeler, comprising as they do a most complete and convincing statement of the entire situation:

Statement of Charles H. Wacker, Chairman of The Chicago Plan Commission.

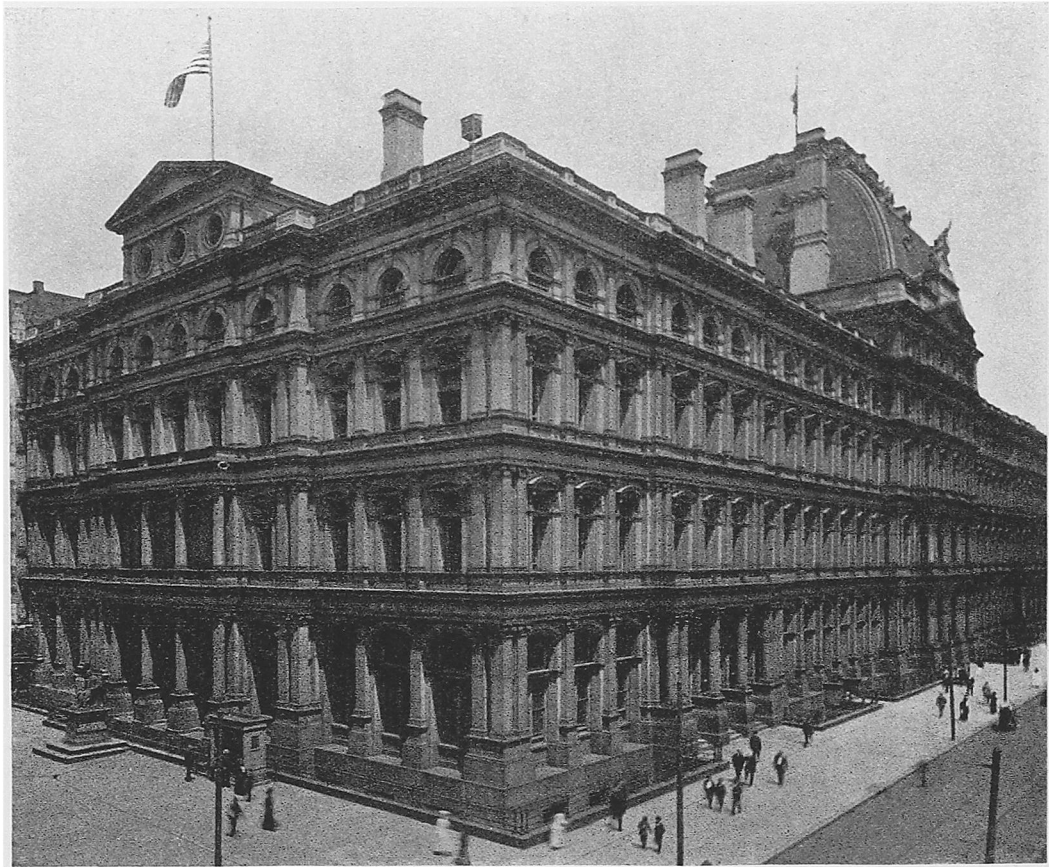
THE subject of a proper location and adequate site for the proposed new main post office, to be built upon the west side of Chicago, is one which for six years has been given the most earnest thought and study by the Government and the business and civic interests of Chicago. During that period, although different sites have been recommended, there has never at any time been any division of opinion as to the area of land necessary.

The post office slogan of Chicago is, "Two blocks, first, last, and all the time."

In procuring the site for the new Chicago post office time is the essence, because the great improvements in that immediate vicinity, consequent upon the building of the New Union Terminal, with all that pertains to it, costing approximately \$55,000,000, will very considerably affect the value of all surrounding property, and any pronounced delay in securing the site might prove serious and expensive to the Government.

From my activities as chairman of the Chicago Plan Commission, I have studied Chicago's postal needs for many years. My associates in this delegation are men who have also had active parts in the study and solution of this most important problem for Chicago and for the country at large.

We are not dreamers, nor men who unduly value the importance of Chicago in the American national scheme of things. We are not inspired, in our mis-



POST OFFICE, PHILADELPHIA
Building erected 1884

—From Chicago Plan Commission Collection

When the Philadelphia post office site was purchased, at a cost of \$1,573,867, the postal receipts were only \$1,568,669. On the same basis, Chicago, with postal receipts of \$25,000,000, would have a postal site appropriation of \$25,182,472. The area of the Philadelphia site is 85,135 sq. ft. Chicago would have a site area of ten blocks, based on the proportionate postal receipts of Philadelphia and Chicago. The site recommended for Chicago is two blocks, not ten. The appropriation asked is six millions, not twenty-five.

sion here, to attempt to secure for Chicago an appropriation which will build a monument to advertise our city, and we are not so moved by an idea of getting a big Government building in our city as to lose sight of the many important elements in our local situation.

There are men in our delegation, Mr. Chairman, who have seen Chicago grow from 150,000 to 2,500,000 people; and I can say that I myself have seen it grow from 60,000, at the time I reached Chicago, to 2,500,000. They see our city now constructing, at an annual cost of \$100,000,000, 650 miles of new buildings yearly, to house its new population. They see Chicago doing a business of \$1,500,000,000 annually. They have seen Chicago's postal receipts go up from \$5,000,000 a year in 1896 to more than \$25,000,000 in 1914, a period of 18 years. They are among the business men who see our city trying to struggle through its burden of a nation's business with postal facilities so cramped that the very progress of the city is held back thereby.

That is, in part, why these men are here urging you and pleading with you to give Chicago relief from a situation which is perilous and fast becoming intolerable.

You can not build too big to meet future needs. There is no use building too small; we have a place that is too small now, and there is no use building at all unless to meet the situation that is coming. It is a matter of regrettable history that our Government has never yet been able to catch up with the demands for space in Chicago's postal development. The story of Chicago's successive post office buildings is one chapter of inadequacy after another. No sooner has a building been finished than it has been proven too small for its purposes. Remodeling, crowding and high-pressure methods have been put into effect in vain; the business of the office has always exceeded the accommodations provided. And that, gentlemen, in the nation's second city in population and premier producer of postal revenues.

To illustrate—and in this I shall use round num-

bers as being more convenient to memorize, although we have detailed figures for all we set forth to you—let us consider the building in use in 1896. It had a floor area of 121,000 square feet. The postal experts of the day estimated that 245,000 square feet would be needed in the new building. That building, when opened in 1906, afforded 246,000 square feet of floor space, but proved from the first entirely inadequate. By remodeling at a large cost and by putting into use the basement of the structure, 423,000 feet, the space was still inadequate, and the architectural appearance of the building was seriously affected.

The fact is, that the first post office—the one prior to that one of which I have spoken—was inadequate and had to be torn down, and the second one, before it was finished, was found inadequate.

The present local officials estimate that 775,000 square feet will be needed in the new post-office building; and it is generally held that the present facilities are 50 per cent too small for effective work, and that after less than 10 years' use of the present building. Upon the same basis of increase, there will be needed, by the time the proposed new building is in use 10 years, a total of 1,500,000 square feet. That would require a 20-story building, if only one block of property is secured as a new site.

The proposed Chicago post office will be at the pivotal center of the world's greatest postal system. Through the huge railway terminals nearby flows the most tremendous flood of postal matter that is centralized at any one point in this country.

This flood of postal matter in Chicago manifestly affects mail distribution for the entire nation. As Chicago is the distributing center of the country, the facilities for that work in our city must be on a larger scale than in any other American city. Whether that shall be at the cost of two millions, or of six millions, or fifteen millions of dollars, cannot enter into the equation seriously; it is entirely a question of what is needed. This need, whatever it is, must be supplied. The postal business of the country is so vast that to stint the outlay at so critical and strategic a point would be unwise and unfortunate, to say the least.

We appear here as speaking for Chicago, because our primary interest is naturally that of our city, but we urge you to consider with us that this is no local question. The people of New York, Boston, Washington, Cleveland, St. Louis, Kansas City, Minneapolis, and New Orleans are interested and affected.

We submit that the whole country is vitally interested in having at Chicago the best facilities that can be had. It is therefore of greater importance to give Chicago what it needs than for any other city in the country to get what it wants.

And the biggest element in meeting the situation is to provide an ample ground area while it can still be secured at low cost.

The \$1,750,000 appropriation now available is insufficient to secure even one block in the section where the new building must be placed. Even if it could purchase the needed block, however, what would be the situation?

The fact is, that instead of securing a site larger than the one now in use the Federal Government would really secure a smaller one, for the largest block within the desired district is 7 per cent smaller

than the present post-office site. All blocks within two blocks of the railway terminals, where the new post office must be located, are of nearly uniform area, 398 by 320 feet, comprising 127,000 square feet of land. Figure it out anyway you can, gentlemen, and we will undertake to prove to you that to secure only one block in that west side area will be to close the door absolutely and without restriction upon any future expansion of the main postal facilities of Chicago.

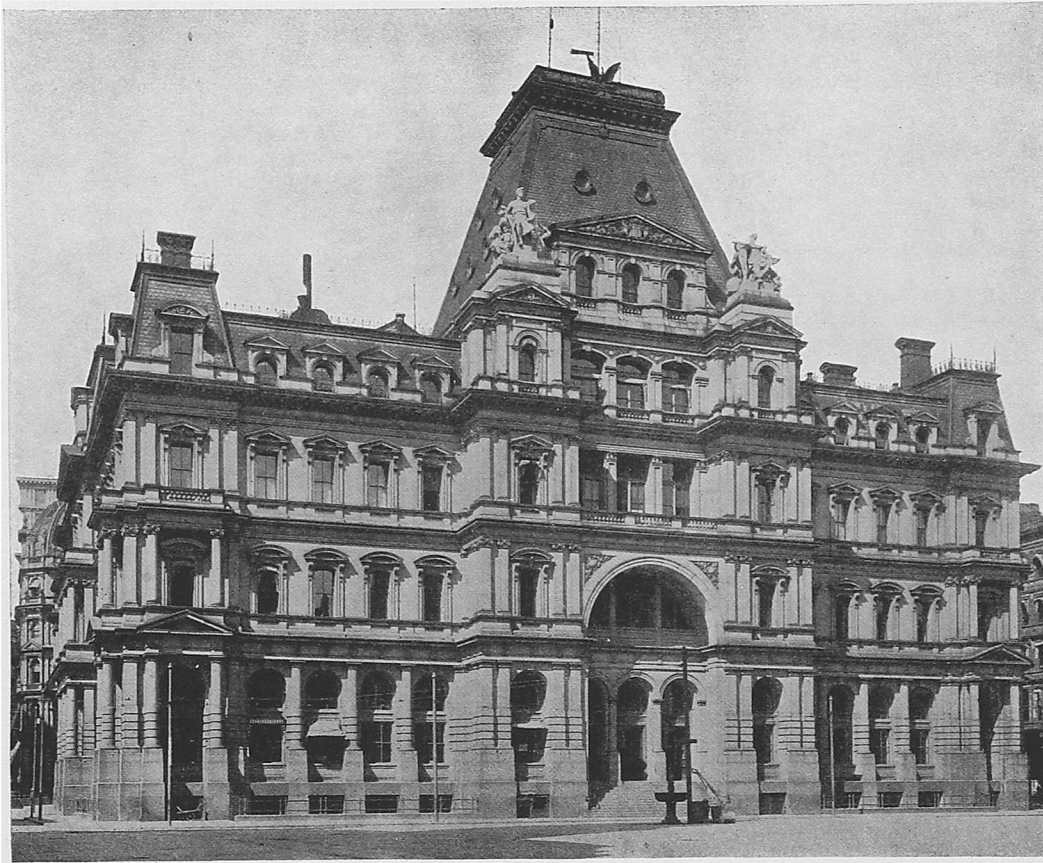
Taking the space now used, 423,000 square feet, if the actual increase of the last 10 years is maintained during the next 10 years there will be required, even with crowding, a total of 846,000 square feet. This is 221,000 square feet more than the available floor area of a properly constructed 10-story building upon a single block.

These are facts. Now, can it be fairly said by anyone mindful of the importance of this matter that the Government ought not to look even further ahead than 10 years? Is it not instantly apparent that our concern over this problem is well founded? Are you, as men handling a business question of such importance, content to attempt to have such a vast business enterprise carried on for this Government under such handicaps? Would you advocate such a course for any private enterprise doing a \$25,000,000 annual business and doubling itself every 10 years if you were the executive heads? No; you could not afford such an experiment with an enormously profitable, prosperous, and growing private business. To try it with a public venture would be, we sincerely declare, an act of monstrous and inexcusable folly.

Comparisons are odious and I shall not make them; but I may say that we admire the magnificent provision the Government has made for handling the mail problem of New York City. Look at its huge new main post office, costing six and a quarter million dollars. It stands on ground of greater area than the two blocks which Chicago is asking for, and adjoins the Pennsylvania Terminal. Also, plans are under way for another fine postal structure of similar size to be built near the Grand Central Station, besides maintaining the old main post office building. The Government has done all this for a city which does not begin to compare with Chicago as a main distributing center. We have more business in our post office, and yet they have two splendid buildings in New York and a third one contemplated. That speaks for itself.

Without regard to the actions of past Congresses, however, in providing postal facilities for other cities, we submit that Chicago must not be denied that which it absolutely needs. There can, indeed, be only commendation for the business sagacity this Government will show by assuring the future through securing in Chicago the needed two-block site at this time.

Chicago desires to remind this committee that it is a city with a remarkable record of modesty in its demands and requests upon the General Government. The fact is, that we have not gotten anything near what we were entitled to in the past; but the fact was that the people did not work with their Representatives; but we expect to do that in the future, and we expect to get more.



POST OFFICE, BOSTON
Site purchased 1868; building erected 1877

—From Chicago Plan Commission Collection

It may be urged that the Government sometimes loses money by ill-advised purchases of post-office sites. No such argument can fairly be urged against our project. The present post-office building site in Chicago cost the Government \$1,000,000; the land is worth to-day not less than \$12,000,000. That increment, if it could be realized, would buy the two-block site that we propose and put a \$5,000,000 building upon it.

And I desire here to make the positive and unqualified assertion that the two blocks, namely 49 and 50, if now purchased will, in the course of the next 10 to 20 years, show an enormous increase in value, because they are located in a comparatively unimproved district at the door of the very heart of the so-called "loop district," which comprises the most valuable property of our city.

We are exceedingly fearful of the possible result of a building upon one square, because the estimate of 20 years from to-day must be reduced, owing to the fact that it will be about 10 years before occupancy can be had, thus allowing for only 10 years of service. This would place us face to face again with the same situation which has confronted the city of Chicago during the life of the three previous post-office buildings, as above recited. Expansion

would then only be possible at tremendous cost, if at all.

In the short lifetime of those present at the hearing on this subject before your honorable body three post offices have been built in Chicago, the first two being torn down after 10 years of use and the third confessed inadequate before occupancy. We plead for ample provision of ground space, in order to avoid the recurrence of such a lamentable condition for the fourth time.

It must never be forgotten that the capacity of a commercial building is controlled by the teaming facilities, which in turn are controlled by available street frontage.

While the office-building type of construction, aided by mechanical handling of mail matter, may afford sufficient floor area, the upward extension of the building will not increase the loading space at or near the street level. This remains constant, no matter how high the building may be.

Our unalterable belief in the need for two blocks for the site inclines us to the further statement that the great outstanding phase of this question is that of sufficient space to meet the undoubted necessities of the future as represented by 25 years.

We are united absolutely in the belief that not

only will two blocks built up to the full economic height be required, but that these two blocks will need to be augmented by substations, transfer stations, tube and belt systems, and every other known device, and that even thus equipped the Post Office Department will be put to it to care for the business which will be thrust upon them.

The tremendous growth of the parcels-post business must be reckoned with. Statistics are not available because of the recent installation of this system, but we who are in the midst of it feel that we know that the growth of this department of the Government's postal business will continue at a greatly increasing rate, and that space should be obtained in order to meet the very certain uncertainties which will arise.

The fact that the parcels-post business of Chicago already exceeds that of any other five cities of the country combined should be remembered, and if due consideration is given to the increase in tonnage since the beginning of the parcels-post system, and it is carried forward for the 10 years which will probably elapse before a new building can be occupied, it will be evident that a 10-story building covering two blocks will not be too large.

Now, the fact is that with a large number of businesses in the city of Chicago they must have quick service, sending the mail to the depot in their own wagons, because the postal facilities are not adequate in the city of Chicago to take care of that business. Is that a proper position for the Government of the United States to be in, forcing the people of the city to use their own wagons to transport the mails simply because the facilities of the post office are not sufficient to handle them? Is that fair to the city of Chicago?

The two-block site that we are advocating is being advanced, basically, upon these five elements:

First, on account of its proximity to two great railway terminals, in which more than 62 per cent of all the mail is handled; being directly between them and in their pathway, it affords a site which, from the standpoint of strategy in postal operation, is nothing less than providential.

Second, its accessibility to and from all parts of the city and the other railway terminals, together with its position with respect to the orderly design of Chicago's street system, gives it a most scientific character, from the viewpoint of location.

Third, it will provide a building area not only sufficient for the future, but it will do so under conditions of such solid surrounding development, and at so low a cost, that the Government will find in it not alone a proper site for business purposes, but also an excellent realty investment.

Fourth, at no other point can as large a street area be secured to facilitate traffic to and from the post office; and this is of vital importance to prevent an intolerable congestion which will ensue if another site is chosen.

Fifth. Only by securing and properly developing a two-block site can the needs of Chicago and of the Nation at that great postal center be met. To attempt to meet them otherwise will be to defeat economy, efficiency and dispatch, and will prolong waste-fulness, inefficiency and extravagance.

From our experience, knowledge, and familiarity

with local conditions, backed by long and careful study of the problems involved, we submit these views as the fruit of sound and ripe judgment. We hold ourselves in readiness to prove in detail to your committee or to any of its members the correctness of any and all of our contentions as outlined here to-day. And for the reasons given this delegation confidently relies upon your committee to make a favorable report on the pending measure to increase the Chicago post-office site appropriation.

Statement of Harry A. Wheeler, Chairman Special Postoffice Committee, Chicago Plan Commission.

AN argument for a new post office building is not necessary, and this delegation has not come here to argue the need for a building; that need was recognized when the first appropriation was made, and it has been recognized since in the increasing appropriations, but at no time have we been able to agree upon the place where that building should be located.

The location of it must be dependent upon the location of the principal railway terminals of Chicago; and until those terminals had been fixed—and that was only a year ago—we could not come here with a definite recommendation as to the plat of ground we thought would be most available for the purpose.

As I see it, there are certain conditions that are always involved with the selection of a post-office site. First the relation to transportation facilities.

With respect to transportation there can be no other site quite so advantageous from the standpoint of proximity to the great transportation lines as these two blocks proposed. It is true that, in so far as the New York Central, Illinois Central, and other lines are concerned, they have their terminals on the east side of the river, but these handle only 38 per cent of the volume of mail received and dispatched as against 62 per cent which comes in at the West side stations. And in that respect, because of the nearness to the greatest amount of mail traffic which comes into and goes out of Chicago, and because it will not be necessary to transport this great tonnage except by the underground passage from one building to another across the street, you have an absolutely ideal location in the one proposed.

And from the standpoint of the public at large, just take this into consideration, that within this area, indicating the so-called loop district, which is less than one-quarter of a square mile, is really the congested district of Chicago; no other site can be reasonably secured that will be nearer the center of the congested district eliminating, if you will, access to transportation facilities.

Then, as an investment, property values may be slightly lower over here on blocks south of Van Buren street than here, where we are proposing, but I doubt if you would find them very much so. There is no property in the congested district that can approach it with respect to price. I am trustee of an institution that is now seeking to acquire a piece of property very close to the river, on South Water Street and on Fifth Avenue, which is on the outer edge of the congested district, and we are paying \$25 a square foot for the land alone, and that is the best piece of property that I know of in what I call our loop district.



POST OFFICE, CLEVELAND
Building erected; original half 1856; completed 1912

—From Chicago Plan Commission Collection

Now, in point of relationship to the city center, I think you should take this into consideration, that on the west side, with the distance across the river 200 feet, and the distance across that lower range of tracks about the same, you are not more than 450 feet away from the loop district. The river seems to be a barrier against the development of business outside of that loop district; but we have grown to a point in Chicago where it is absolutely necessary to extend our business center and the logical direction is west, so that this development on the west side is bound to be an important development in the years to come, simply because we can do no more in this congested quarter of a mile.

And even if you were to do away with the present Federal building; suppose it were to be sold and your present ground values to be repossessed and your building demolished, there is no doubt in my mind that, for Federal purposes, the construction of a building of proper type on the west side of the river would be quite as convenient for your subtreasury and courts and other public offices as where they are now located, because you are only about one-eighth of a mile from the center of the business district. It is the postmaster's judgment that there should be a central station, and that station should be in the loop; but I am calling your attention to the fact that whether the location is at the point where the post office now is, or at this proposed place, from

the carriers' point of view, or the point of view of distribution, you have very little inconvenience to your carriers, who would, by traveling two or three blocks farther, reach their various stations and delivery points; there may be a convenience in having the other Federal offices located where they are; the present building is fairly well adapted for general Federal purposes.

There has been no discussion of the housing of the other Federal offices in that building. The whole idea is to construct a post-office building in this new place, and leave the old building for the courts and other offices. But when we are talking about the expenditure of money, we have got to remember that, in any expenditure that is made, it is not money spent not to come back again, like putting it into a building that might have to be demolished after a few years; it is an investment of funds on a basis that you will never be able to duplicate for like property; and it would be in such a location that, if it ever became necessary to remove the post office from that site and put it in a more centralized point, on account of the development of the city, you would have a property value not only infinitely increased over what you pay for it, but representing an increase over the cost of any improvement you could possibly put upon it.

That is illustrated in your present building in the down-town district; the ground cost was one mil-

lion, present value is twelve million; and this property over here on the west side, with the tremendous improvements that are under way, will naturally have a very much more rapid rise in the future than in the past few years—then in five years from now you could not touch that property for the price now indicated; because the minute the great union terminal is built you are going to find improvements of a commercial type all about this property; so that you could not afford to buy the property in the future and demolish the buildings that would be on it; whereas to-day, in those two blocks, by great good fortune, there is not any single building that has any particular value.

Now, let me give you the figures furnished us by the Chicago Real Estate Board, whose appraisal committee, at great expense to themselves, and without any expense to our Chicago Plan Commission, or to the Government, made a very careful study of every foot of this ground.

Block No. 49, which is this block which lies out on Madison street, a section line, and one of the greatest thoroughfares in the city of Chicago, running clear through to the western limits of the city and connecting up the city and the country districts, they appraised at \$2,800,000 for the value of the land, and the buildings they estimate to be worth \$683,000.

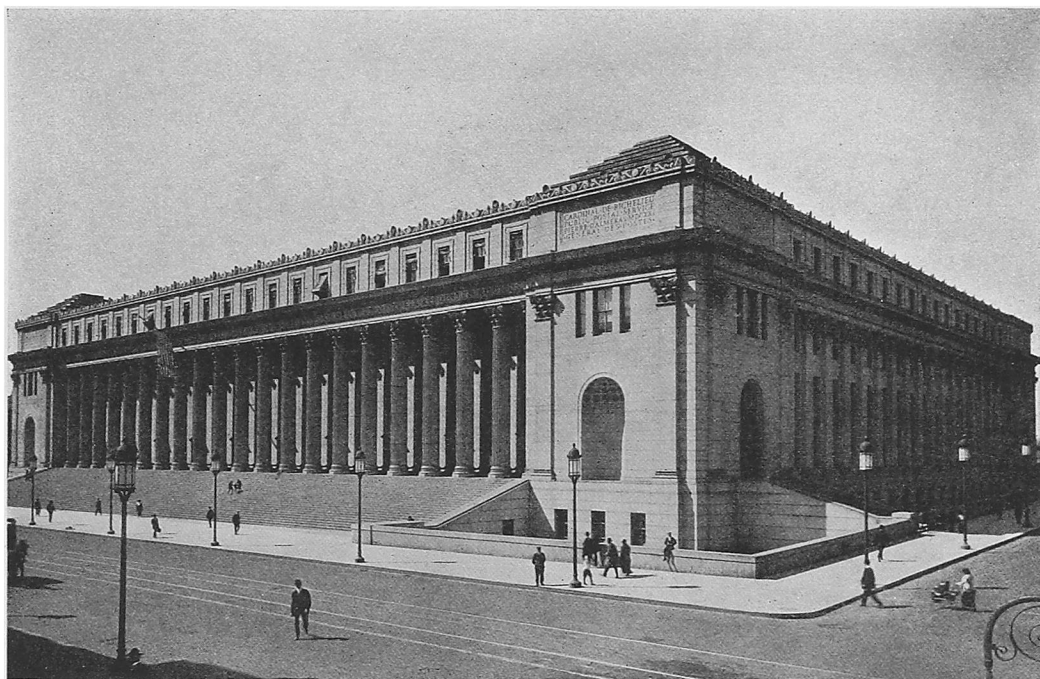
Block 50, which immediately adjoins the new union station, is given a value of \$2,114,000; and the buildings on it are only worth \$288,000. They are

practically a lot of old buildings that will be torn down anyway.

The Government has a right of condemnation; and your condemnation will be based upon the value put upon the property as shown by recent transfers; and these figures I have given you are based upon transfers of property made within that area within recent times, showing the value as nearly as our real estate experts can get it. In the matter of ground area that is necessary, no single block is large enough to provide adequately for the future. The post-office uses 435,000 square feet in the present building, and is using a great deal more than that in the other parts of Chicago for substations.

There is no single block of ground that will answer the purpose. Let us assume that you might get a block for less than the suggested price elsewhere. You will spend in the cost of transportation of the mail from your central office to the transportation companies more than the difference in the cost of the land, even if you paid but \$14 or \$15 a square foot for the block less advantageously located; and then you have to reckon with existing improvements on the land.

There is no street area around any one block on the west side of Chicago that will accommodate the congestion that must ensue before a building can be built, in the handling of the matter that comes into the central office. The Postmaster General says it is less desirable to have a great central office than it



POST OFFICE, NEW YORK

—From Chicago Plan Commission Collection

The area recommended for the Chicago post office site is 205,301 sq. ft. This is one-third less than the site area of the new Pennsylvania terminal post office in New York. New York has three main post offices, the aggregate area of which is 546,460 sq. ft. Notwithstanding in 1912 the postal receipts of New York exceeded those of Chicago by only \$3,365,058. In 1915 Chicago's receipts exceeded New York's in some months by \$30,000 a month. Yet Washington officials propose to put the new Chicago post office on a single block seven per cent smaller in area than our present postal site. Chicago would have a site area of four blocks, based on the proportionate postal receipts of New York and Chicago. The site recommended for Chicago, however, is two blocks, not four.

is to have stations. You have to have substations in a city like Chicago in any event, and many of them, but no matter how many substations are provided, if the growth of the future approximates the past, provision will have to be made on a scale much larger than is now contemplated by the department to accommodate that tonnage which must be handled only at a central point.

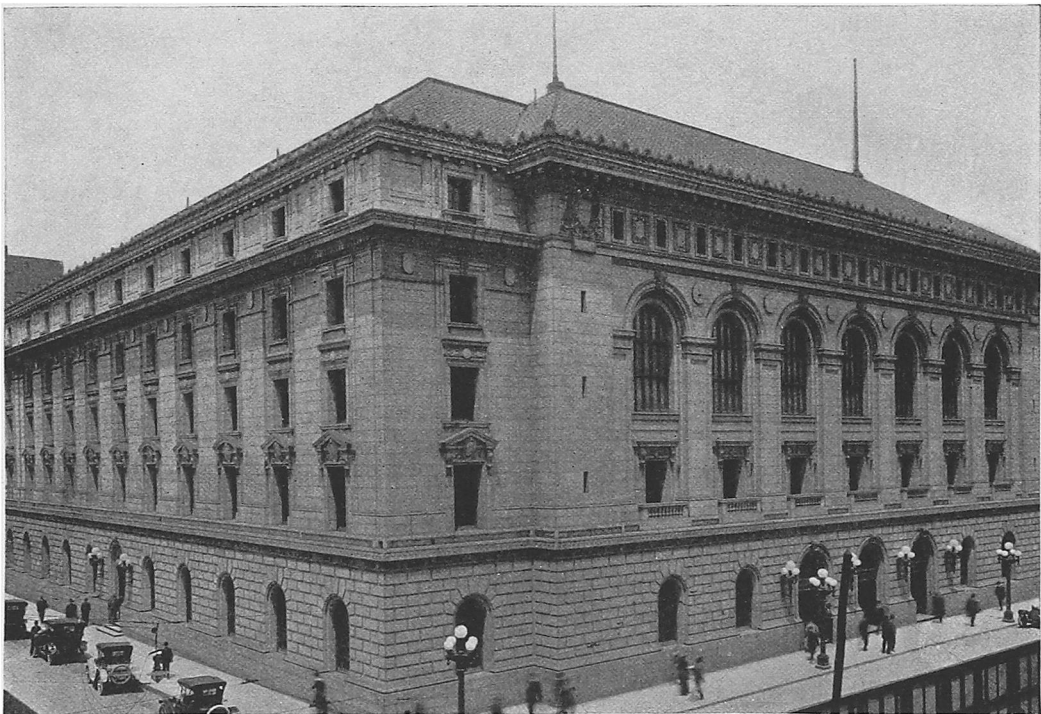
The purchase of two blocks which we propose is not only an economy because it can be acquired now for much less than it could be if you acquire it after five or six years have gone by, but it is doubtful, unless this ground is secured now, whether at any reasonable price it can be secured later on, in view of the development which is in sight on the west side.

We know, however, what we have to handle today, in spite of the 51 substations, and the volume is steadily increasing. Under the most conservative estimates given by the postal authorities they say that 775,000 square feet is necessary for any new building which might be built, and assuming that it may be 10 years before the new building can be ready for occupancy, it does not require much of a stretch of the imagination to add three or four hundred thousand square feet as the amount of necessary additional space a decade hence.

Take a single block and build a 10-story building. How many square feet of space are you going to get out of it? Nine hundred thousand square feet is all the space you are going to get on a single block. I

leave it to you to say whether a single block is likely to be sufficient. The difficulty that has presented itself to the Treasury Department and the Post Office Department so many times is in the shifting and changing of locations or centers of business that make it desirable to change the location of the post office that probably was of value for the purpose only for a short time.

The last thing I want to say is to fix in your minds that this site is absolutely central to the future development of Chicago. Chicago can not grow to the east. It will grow some to the north, but not to a great extent, because there it runs against areas that are not adapted for warehousing. To the south are the railroad yards, and it is almost impossible to have any development in that direction, whereas west is this great area in closest proximity to the loop district, within walking distance of every section of that district, where will be the future development of the city for business purposes. That means in the years to come, 15, 20 or 25 years from now, the proposed site will be just as central as now and more so, and the railroads have made it their home for 50 years to come instead of for the next 10 years. I think we can assume if the construction of a post-office building there on this adequate site is going to be central now to our needs, and in the years to come still central to whatever needs may develop in Chicago, it would not be a bad investment to anticipate those needs and get enough ground to accommodate the future needs of the city.



ATLANTA POST OFFICE, ERECTED 1914

The area of the Atlanta site is 40,000 sq. ft. Chicago would have a site area of five blocks, based on the proportionate postal receipts of Atlanta and Chicago. The site recommended for Chicago is two blocks, not five.

[Editor's Note]—The subject matter immediately beneath the post office illustrations is for comparative purposes only, and is not intended to seriously convey the idea that Chicago's needs should be supplied on the basis of the provision for these other cities, as indicated in the figures shown. Of course, it would be ridiculous to assume that Chicago should have twenty blocks for a post office site because Denver has one block, although the relative difference in the postal receipts of Denver and Chicago would indicate that need, based on the government's provision for Denver.

Neither is it reasonable to assume that Chicago should have \$25,000,000 for a site appropriation because Philadelphia's site cost \$1,500,000, although the receipts at the time of the purchase of the Philadelphia site, if taken as a basis for Chicago's appropriation, would warrant a \$25,000,000 investment in a Chicago site.

The main issue is that the government officials should be induced not to deal with Chicago in a parsimonious way. A single block with a ten story building has been suggested by the government, but this is almost inconceivable when it is understood that the largest single block where the post office should be located, adjacent to the west side

terminals, is seven percent smaller than the area of the present post office site.

In the government's calculations no account is taken of expansion, although it is proven that even a ten story building on a single block will only be sufficient for the needs of the post office department at the time it is finished. It will allow nothing for expansion. The increase in the postal business of Chicago for the past ten years indicates that by the time the new Chicago post office is finished a twenty-story building on a single block will be required.

What will the government do, then? The government will then be confronted with two alternatives—expansion of the post office to twenty stories, or the purchase of an entirely new site and another removal, as the purchase price of an adjacent block at that time would be absolutely prohibitive. Chicago would then be face to face with the present condition that necessitates a new site now—a condition confronting Chicago periodically every ten years for the past forty years.

The only answer to Chicago's needs, and the one which should be heeded by the government, is "BUY TWO BLOCKS NOW." The arguments of Charles H. Wacker, Chairman of the Chicago Plan Commission, and Harry A. Wheeler, its special post office committee chairman, on the need of two blocks now are unassailable and cannot be challenged.



DESIGN FOR MAUSOLEUM: WINGS OF PEACE

By Kathleen Beverley Robinsor

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago